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School's out. Summer's in. The perfect time for a day at the beach and a dip in the lake. Only you can't take a dip in the lake because the water in Lake Michigan might very well make you sick. This happened 613 times in 2004. That's the number of beach closings for that year, up from 213 beach closings in 2003.

A major culprit in the poisoning of Lake Michigan is the municipalities that dump sewage into the lake.

Lest we forget, Lake Michigan not only is a recreational resource, it is the source of our drinking water.

U. S. Rep. Mark Kirk, R-10th, of Highland Park summed it up bluntly when he said, "We must put a stop to the poisoning of our water supply."

Kirk and U.S. Rep. Dan Lipinski, D-3rd, of Chicago, introduced legislation last week aimed at eliminating the dumping of sewage into Lake Michigan.

The Great Lakes Water Protection Act would establish a federal deadline of 2026 for ending sewage dumping into the Great Lakes. After the deadline, those who violate the dumping regulations would be fined \$100,000 for every day they are in violation. The legislation also would create a fund that would be used to help clean up water and beaches in areas where violations have occurred.

Among the supporters of the Great Lakes Water Protection Act are the Alliance of the Great Lakes, the Sierra Club, Lake Forest Open Lands, the Nature Conservancy, the Chicago Wilderness Society and the North Shore Sanitary District.

The legislation has our support, too, and we hope, yours.